

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, February 18, 1801 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JAMES MADISON J. MSS.

Washington, Feb 18, 1801.

Dear Sir, —Notwithstanding the suspected infidelity of the post, I must hazard this communication. The minority in the H of R, after seeing the impossibility of electing B, the certainty that a legislative usurpation would be resisted by arms, and a recourse to a convention to re-organize and amend the government, held a consultation on this dilemma, whether it would be better for them to come over in a body and go with the tide of the times, or by a negative conduct suffer the election to be made by a bare majority, keeping their body entire & unbroken, to act in phalanx on such ground of opposition as circumstances shall offer; and I know their determination on this question only by their vote of yesterday. Morris of V withdrew, which made Lyon's vote that of his State. The Maryland federalists put in 4. blanks, which made the positive ticket of their colleagues the vote of the State. S Carolina & Delaware put in 6. blanks. So there were 10. States for one candidate, 4. for another, & 2. blanks. We consider this, therefore, as a declaration of war, on the part of this band. But their conduct appears to have brought over to us the whole body of the federalists, who, being alarmed with the danger of a dissolution of the government, had been made most anxiously to wish the very administration they had opposed, & to view it when obtained, as a child of their own. They [*illegible*] too their quondam leaders separated fairly from them, and themselves relegated under other banners. Even Hamilton & Higginson have been partisans for us. This circumstance, with

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the unbounded confidence which will attach to the new ministry as soon as known, will start us on right ground. Mr. A. embarrasses us. He keeps the offices of State and War vacant, but has named Bayard M P to France, and has called an unorganized Senate to meet the fourth of March. As you do not like to be here on that day, I wish you would come within a day or two after. I think that between that & the middle of the month we can so far put things under way, as that we may go home to make arrangements for our final removal. Come to Conrad's, where I will bespeak lodgings

for you. Yesterday Mr. A. nominated Bayard to be M P of the U S to the French republic; to-day, Theophilus Parsons Atty Gen of the U S in the room of C. Lee, who, with Keith Taylor *cum multis aliis*, are appointed judges under the new system. H.G. Otis is nominated a district attorney. A vessel has been waiting for some time in readiness to carry the new minister to France. My affectionate salutations to Mrs. Madison & yourself. Adieu.